



Éire agus Breizh: United in Struggle

“In Ireland Republican Sinn Féin has played and continues to play a leading role in opposition to the illegal Anglo/US led occupation of Iraq. Irish Republicans have throughout our history opposed all imperialist wars of conquest, from the Boer War fought by the British in South Africa at the turn of the last century, the First

World War right up to the Gulf war in 1991 when we were the first to protest at the landing of US warplanes at Shannon airport.

DURING a visit to Brittany as a guest of the Breton Independence movement EMGANN, the Vice President of Republican Sinn Féin Des Dalton spoke at a Press Conference in Rennes on May 25, a



public meeting also in Rennes on May 26 and a meeting in Guingamp on May 27 outlining Republican Sinn Féin’s views on the proposed EU Constitution and neutrality. Their opposition to the Stormont Agreement and determination to end British rule in Ireland was also explained.

Des Dalton said: “Ireland like Brittany is a small nation, which over many centuries hashad to struggle to assert her own identity, in terms of

history, language and culture. Today part of Ireland remains under British occupation, denying the Irish people’s right to national unity, sovereignty and independence, all of which has been reinforced by the sectarian Stormont Agreement. Because of our commitment to a free and independent Ireland and our opposition to imperialism in all of its forms, from the beginning we have opposed the entire EEC/EU project.

“In every referendum since 1972 when the 26 County State joined the then EEC, Republican Sinn Féin have campaigned against the continued erosion of Irish sovereignty and neutrality. In 1972 we warned of the effects which membership would have on Irish agriculture and fisheries. Today those effects are there for all to see, the numbers who now work in agriculture have been halved whilst the Irish fishing industry has been destroyed. On an international level Republican Sinn Féin’s warning that the EEC would eventually become a militarised federal super-state is being fulfilled with every passing day.

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“The entire EU political and economic project is fundamentally undemocratic. It is about the centralisation of power and decision making, taking it away from the various national parliament and placing it in the hands of unelected bureaucrats. The European Parliament is nothing but an over subsidised talking shop, with real power wielded by the commission and the council of ministers. Indeed as Republican Sinn Féin pointed out at the time, The Nice Treaty was not about enlargement but rather ensuring that the structures of the EU were changed to ensure that all decision-making remained weighted in favour of the major states such as Germany, France, Italy and Britain at the expense of the smaller countries. The EU Constitution accelerates this process and sets about giving the EU the framework of a super-state. The formulation of a ‘Common defence policy’ and the establishment of ‘Battle Groups’ to which all states must contribute troops shows clearly the direction in which the EU is headed.

“Almost 15 years ago Jacques Delors spoke about the resource wars which would have to be fought in the 21 Century in pursuit of the EU’s political and economic interests, the ongoing Anglo-US led war



in Iraq is surely the first of such resource wars which the rich and powerful north is set to wage on the poor and developing south. The EU Constitution provides the means by which a European army can be raised to participate in such wars. Whilst states could choose not to participate in particular armed actions, under the constitution they could not remain neutral, and would be obliged to support “actively and unreservedly” EU Foreign and Security policy, they also must “comply” with the EU’s actions

in foreign policy. This of course undermines the neutrality of states such as 26 Counties of Ireland. Under the terms of the constitution all states must pay for the establishment and administration of EU military policy. Even more sinister is the involvement of NATO, which in all likelihood will become the military arm of the EU superstate, helping to impose the warped new world order of George Bush and Tony Blair.

“For small nations like Ireland and Brittany the EU merely represents another form of imperialism. Instead of having power centred in London or Paris it will instead be administered from Brussels. This will not change the reality of either British or French rule; it is merely replacing one form of imperialism with another. Under the EU Constitution the rights of the stateless nations of Europe will be further reduced and undermined. This should not surprise us as the original Treaty of Rome was drawn up by the former imperial powers of Europe, who have in the decades since moulded the EU in their own image. Not only do they not recognise even the existence of some small nations but

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also have attempted to erase all vestiges of their identity. In Brittany you are all too familiar with the French state's attempt to take away your language and culture, just as Britain did in Ireland. These large states such as Britain and France have waged war on our peoples rather than accept our right to our own nation state.

“As Irish Republicans we are also internationalists, over many years we have developed our links with all peoples who struggle to assert their right to nationhood and independence. In particular we have been proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with the various stateless nations of Europe be it the Basque country, Corsica, Sardinia, Wales, Scotland Galicia and off course Brittany, all of us are united in struggle and our commitment to see our countries take their rightful place in the world community of nations.

“Ireland's relationship with Brittany has always been special, our shared Celtic heritage coupled with our shared experience of colonialism and foreign occupation are the reasons for this. Following the Second World War many Bretons came to Ireland to escape persecution at the hands of the French state, amongst those was the artist Yann Goulet, who remained throughout his life a friend of



Ireland and the Irish Republican Movement, he designed monuments all over Ireland, erected to the memory of those who gave their lives for Irish freedom.

“In particular Irish people remember with pride and affection the solidarity shown by the Breton people during the 1981 hunger strikes, when Bobby Sands and his nine comrades died in the

H Blocks of Long Kesh resisting Britain's attempt to criminalise the Irish fight for freedom. Thousands of Breton people took to the streets to demonstrate their support for the struggle of the Irish people.

“The way forward is a free community of nations. The long serving General Secretary of the Celtic



League, Alan Heusaff, a Breton patriot and a true comrade to all Irish Republicans, envisaged a community of free Celtic nations, which like the Nordic council could cooperate on matters of mutual interest, in areas such as trade, tourism and fisheries amongst others.

“Republican Sinn Féin shares this vision, the Irish patriot and leader of the 1916 rising, James Connolly wrote about a federation of free

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peoples, and like him we believe true democracy can only function when the decision making process is fully accountable and operates as close to the people affected by the decisions, politically or economically. The only means of ensuring this is within the framework of the nation state and by involving people in the decision making process at every level from national, to regional, right down to local and community level.

“Like EMGANN we believe in the “right of absolute equality between nations”. This is the only foundation upon which true peace and stability can be created internationally. When all peoples, not just in Europe but also throughout the world are allowed to carve out their own space, exercising their fundamental right to nationhood can we lay the basis for a world order based on the principles of justice, democracy and peace. The Breton people can only experience true democracy, when they have governmental structures which they have created, which involve them and which are accountable to them. Their right like that of all nations to elect a parliament and government which will legislate and govern in their best interests as well as representing them on the international stage is absolute.

“The EU cannot provide the vehicle for this kind of revolutionary change. As a body it denies the existence of the stateless nations of Europe, the philosophy, culture and history upon which it is based is imperialist. For this reason we view the campaign against the EU Constitution as yet another front in the ongoing struggle for Irish Independence, for Breton independence and the independence and freedom of all stateless peoples.

“In Ireland Republican Sinn Féin has played and continues to play a leading role in opposition to the illegal Anglo/US led occupation of Iraq. Irish Republicans have throughout our history opposed all imperialist wars of conquest, from the Boer War fought by the British in South Africa at the turn of the last century, the First World War right up to the Gulf war in 1991 when we were the first to protest at the landing of US warplanes at Shannon airport.

“Not only have we opposed such wars but have also actively opposed all attempts to involve the Irish people in these wars on the side of the imperialists. Be it campaigning against recruitment for the British army during the Boer War or conscription during the First World War, likewise we have opposed all attempts to breach Irish neutrality. The actions of the present 26 County Dublin government in granting landing and refuelling and airspace facilities to US warplanes are illegal under both domestic and international law. They also are in direct opposition to the clearly expressed views of the vast majority of Irish people.

“In Republican Sinn Féin’s proposals for a New Ireland following a British withdrawal, EIRE NUA (New Ireland) we set out clearly our view of Ireland’s place in the world, in a proposed constitution

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for a free Ireland it upholds the right of Ireland: “to join international organisations, eg the United Nations, the World Health Organisation — so long as such organisations do not subvert Irish sovereignty and neutrality.” One of the special responsibilities of the parliament of a free Ireland would be: “maintaining Irish neutrality and independence from all power blocs, including the EU, and seeking to secure a nuclear free world.”

“In a spirit of solidarity we move forward shoulder to shoulder with EMGANN and the Breton people, determined to continue our struggle for a free Ireland and a free Brittany, which could together take their place in free a community of our sister Celtic nations.”